



5 Steps to Repair a Partnership at Work

By Mark Goulston

The longer one maintains their defensive routines, the more important it is for them to be right and/or get their way. They're not very good partnership material at work. So how do you get through to them?

The 5 Steps to Repair a Partnership

Tell your partner, "I would like to try something that could resolve a conflict between us and may even repair our relationship going forward, and I'd like to know if you're willing to give it a try." Be forewarned that they may reject it initially because you have surprised them and caught them off guard. If they do, say: "I understand that I caught you off guard, and your response right now is 'no,' but the offer is still open going forward, should you want to give it a try."

Then say, "Tell me in detail about several times in our partnership when I have most frustrated, angered and disappointed you and why, and I promise to not become defensive or get into an argument with you about them."

Then say, "What did you most want to do when those events happened? And why?"

Then say, "What did you end up doing when those events happened? And why?"

Then say, "What should we do starting now so that you and I never need to go through any of those again, and although I may not fully go along with it, what can I do now that would help make it right between us so we can move forward? And why that?"

There is a saying that you have more control over what you say than how it is heard. In the current scenario, you have no control over how the other person will hear what you say or how they react and respond to you. Therefore, don't get attached to whatever their reaction is.

The good news, however, is that regardless of their reaction, you may leave the conversation thinking to yourself, "I can't be any more gracious than that" and there is a good chance that you'll feel good about yourself regardless of what they say or do. An unforgiving attitude hurts partnerships

Circling back to the opening caveat emptor, if you have read through the five steps and are unable or unwilling to try them, there is a chance that you not only have too much of a need to be right and/or get your way, but that you also have an unforgiving attitude. Those qualities can not merely hurt partnerships, they can hurt you everywhere in life. To see if you're perceived that way, reach out to three people who you believe want the best for you and ask them the following three questions:

How much of the time do I act as if I need to be right, have to get my way and appear unforgiving?

What do you think would be the positive effect on my life, success and our relationship if I corrected all three of those?

What has been the negative effect on my life, success and our relationship by acting in those ways?

This may actually give others the chance to get something off their chest that has been bothering them about you. If and when they do, thank them for their candor, apologize to them (with no excuses), commit to them that you'll correct the problems going forward and ask them if you can check with them every month for their candid input about what they've observed.

As difficult and even embarrassing as this might be, would you rather continue to engage in these behaviors that only hurt your success and your relationships?

Companies hire the Goulston Group to improve leadership, management, sales and culture through speaking, consulting, coaching, advising and training when time and money pressures require execution and implementation sooner than later. Mark Goulston is the best-selling author of seven books, including: "Just Listen: Discover the Secret to Getting Through to Absolutely Anyone" and "Talking to Crazy: How to Deal with the Irrational and Impossible People in Your Life."

Dr. Mark Goulston

info@goulstongroup.com

